

Message Text

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43

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CU-04 SS-15 NSC-10 CIAE-00 INR-10

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FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2616

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, TS

SUBJECT: PAN AFRICAN YOUTH FESTIVAL

1. SUMMARY. FESTIVAL OPENED EVENING JULY 15 WITH QUITE IMPRESSIVE CEREMONY FEATURING PARADE OF DELEGATIONS, FLAGS, BANNERS AND WELCOMING SPEECH BY PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA. CONFERENCE WORKING SESSIONS BEGAN JULY 16. IN THEORY, THERE ARE TWO SIMULTANEOUS MORNING SESSIONS OF CONFERENCE AND TWO IN AFTERNOON ON VARIOUS TOPICS, FOLLOWED BY MEETING AND DEMONSTRATION ON "SOLEMN THEME" OF DAY. SPORT AND CULTURAL EVENTS GO ON THROUGHOUT DAY AND EVENING. IN FACT, HOWEVER, CONFERENCE MEETINGS HAVE BEEN SPEECH MAKING SESSIONS, AND SPEECHES MAY OR MAY NOT RELATE TO SUPPOSED TOPIC OF MEETING. (AT SESSION WHERE ONE OF TOPICS WAS BROUGHT IN SAHEL, REPRESENTATIVES OF SENEGAL, MAURETANIA, UPPER VOLTA AND NIGER SPOKE AND DID NOT EVEN MENTION DROUGHT.) SPEECHES GENERALLY LONG AND BORING FILLING WITH USUAL PLATITUDES, THERE IS NO DEBATE AND THERE DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE ANY FORMULATION OF RESOLUTIONS.

2. TUNISIANS IN GENERAL HAVE DONE FINE JOB ORGANIZING FESTIVAL. BUSES AVAILABLE TO TRANSPORT DELEGATIONS, THERE ARE TUNISIAN GUIDES AND HOSTESSES TO AID DELEGATES, AND FESTIVAL PUBLISHING FOUR-PAGE, THREE-LANGUAGE DAILY PAPER ON FESTIVAL ACTIVITIES. HOWEVER, LACK OF DIRECTION AND CONTROL IN MEETINGS AND WORKING SESSIONS, COUPLED WITH VERY WARM WEATHER, HAS LED TO GENERAL LESSENING OF INTEREST IN FESTIVAL PROCEEDINGS, AND FESTIVAL

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APPEARS TO BE DISINTEGRATING WITH SOME DELEGATIONS BEGINNING

TO LEAVE.

3. FESTIVAL BASICALLY AN ARAB-FRANCOPHONE AFFAIR. TANZANIA, KENYA AND NIGERIA ONLY ANGLOPHONE COUNTRIES REPRESENTED, AND LATTER TWO HAVE SMALL DELEGATIONS. FESTIVAL HAS DEFINITELY BEEN FOCUSED ON PALESTINIAN PROBLEM BY ARAB DELEGATIONS. SOLEMN DAY DEMONSTRATION FOR PALESTINE JULY 17 SAW FAIRLY MODERATE SPEECH BY PALESTINIAN DELGATE CONTINUALLY INTERRUPTED BY VARIOUS PRO-PALESTINIAN CHANTS. THIS APPEARED TO TURN BLACK AFRICANS OFF; MOST OF THEM LEFT MEETING BEFORE IT ENDED. EVEN SOLUMN DAY DEMONSTRATION FOR AFRICAN LIBERATION MOVEMENTS JULY 16 USED AS FORUM BY ARABS TO ENCOURAGE BLACK AFRICANS TO BREAK DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL. THIS NEARLY EXCLUSIVE ORIENTATION OF FESTIVAL TOWARDS PALESTINE PROBLEM DOES NOT APPEAR TO HAVE GONE DOWN WELL WITH BLACK AFRICANS. HEAD OF NIGERIAN DELEGATION, WHICH ARRIVED LATE BECAUSE OF INABILITY TO OBTAIN VISAS TO TRANSIT LIBYA SINCE PASSPORTS NOT IN ARABIC (REGULATION NIGERIAN PUBLICLY CHARACTERIZED AS "STUPID"), STATED (IN ENGLISH) THAT MOST SPEECHES HE HAD HEARD HAD BEEN GIVEN IN ARABIC AND THAT AFRICANS SHOULD CONCERN SELVES WITH AFRICAN PROBLEMS.

4. ZAIRE AND LIBYA HAVE BOTH OFFERED TO HOST SECOND YOUTH FESTIVAL. LIBYAN DELEGATION PROMISED THAT FESTIVAL HELD IN TRIPOLI WOULD BE "FREE FROM PROPAGANDA". THERE IS NOT INDIATION YET AS TO WHEN AND IF SEND FESTIVAL MIGGHT BE HELD, BUT IT HIGHLY UNLIKELY THAT IT WOULD BE HELD IN ARAB STATE ESPECIALLY AFTER ORIENTATION THIS YEAR'S FESTIVAL.

5. COMMENT: MOST SPEECHES HAVE BEEN FILLED WITH THE USUAL ANTI-COLONIALISM, ANTI-IMPERIALISM, ANTI-ZIONISM PLATITUDES BUT IN GENERAL HAVE BEEN RELATIVELY MILD. FOR EXAMPLE, AT SOLEMN DAY DEMONSTATION FOR PALESTINE, U.S. ONLY MENTIONED ONCE AND THAT JUST IN PASSING. ABUNDANCE OF WORDS AND LACK OF ANY APPARENT PROGRESS OR CONCRETE ACTIVITY DOES NOT SURPRISE US, ALTHOUGH APPARENCY LACK OF RESOLUTION FORULATING IS UNUSUAL. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT TUNISIANS WILL PRESENT RESOLUTIONS ON LAST DAY OF FESTIVAL WHICH WILL BE ADOPTED BY CONFERENCE WITHOUT GREAT DEAL OF DEBATE, BUT IN ANY EVENT, FESTIVAL LIKELY TO SPUTTER TO CLOSE ON WEEKEND HAVING DONE VERY LITTLE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TO ADVANCE AFRICAN UNITY, SOLIDARITY AND INDEPENDENCE.

6. WRAPUP REPORT WILL FOLLOW AFTER END OF FESTIVAL INCLUDING COMMENTS OF U.S. OBSERVER DELEGATION.

7. DEPT REPEAT AF POSTS IF DESIRED.
RELPH

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